



# South Central District Health

1020 Washington Street N \* Twin Falls ID 83301

Phone: (208) 734-5900 \* Fax: (208) 734-9502

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported in Gooding County**

South Central District Health (SCDH) is reporting the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus encephalitis in the Health District this year. The woman, who is in her 60s, is a resident of Gooding County. She was tested on August 29, 2005, after exhibiting symptoms consistent with West Nile virus (WNV) infection in the two weeks prior to being tested. The woman was hospitalized, has been released, and is recovering from the illness at home.

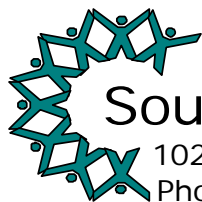
To date almost every state in the U.S. is now reporting at least veterinary cases of West Nile virus. Nationwide, as of August 30, there have been 275 human cases and 16 human deaths reported. Prior to this human case, SCDH has reported 13 positive horse cases of West Nile virus in Gooding and Lincoln counties. No positive mosquito tests have been reported, although testing continues in several areas of the District. One bird has tested positive for WNV in Lincoln County.

People and animals are infected with the West Nile virus through the bite of an infected mosquito and cannot contract the virus from contact with an infected animal or person. The virus is spread by migrating infected birds, which are bitten by mosquitoes. The infected mosquitoes can then pass the virus on to people and other animals.

Idaho began requiring reporting of West Nile infections in April, 2005, and focuses on announcing cases with the more severe form of a West Nile virus infection causing central or peripheral nervous system changes as opposed to West Nile Fever.

Most people infected with the West Nile virus have no symptoms or will only have a mild flu-like illness. Common symptoms of infection include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, eye pain, skin rash, and enlarged lymph nodes. In a small percentage of the population, especially people over age 50, the virus can lead to serious illness requiring hospitalization.

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To protect themselves, people are advised to:

- Insect-proof their homes by repairing or replacing screens;
- Reduce standing water on their property that provides mosquito breeding habitat, such as bird baths and decorative ponds;
- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors;
- Apply insect repellent approved by the EPA to exposed skin and clothing. Follow instructions on the product label, especially for children;
- Avoid mosquitoes when they are most active between dusk and dawn; and
- Report dead birds to your local Fish and Game office.

Additional information about the virus is available from South Central District Health by calling 208-737-5974. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare web site also offers information on West Nile virus at [www.westnile.idaho.gov](http://www.westnile.idaho.gov).

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